

## Safe and Sane Vacations

Vacations are too few, too far between and too brief. No wonder we try to squeeze them for every bit of enjoyment we can muster. As a result, we tend to overdo it. Too much food, too much play, and too much sun can spoil our best-laid plans -- all because we took too little preparation.

Here are some helpful summer vacation tips:

**Carry a first aid kit.** Whether you're traveling to a nearby park or the distant mountains, it's wise to include a well-stocked first aid kit. Your kit should contain bandages, sterile gauze, adhesive tape, scissors, an elastic bandage, acetaminophen, a thermometer, medicated ointments, tweezers, calamine lotion, antiseptic soap, hand towels, a small flashlight and important numbers. Also, learn first aid measures and carry a first aid book.

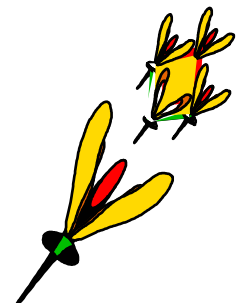


**Beating the Heat.** Except for the cold, heat kills more Americans than any other natural hazard, including hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes. To have fun in the hot summer sun:

- Restrict strenuous activities to the coolest part of the day. Avoid direct exposure to the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- Wear loose fitting, lightweight and light colored clothing that reflects the heat and sunlight.
- To stay cooler on long walks, consider investing in garments made from new high-tech fabrics.
- Drink lots of water and other non-alcoholic fluids before, during, and after strenuous activity. And drink even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Don't take salt tablets unless your doctor has prescribed them, especially if you have high blood pressure or a heart condition.
- Adjust to hot environments gradually. It usually takes a couple of days to acclimate to hot weather.
- Avoid direct sunlight as much as possible. Use a sun screen with a "sun protection factor" that matches your skin type.
- Don't wear a snug hat, since your body's heat needs to escape from your head.
- To protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays, wear sunglasses that shield against UVA and UVB rays. A broad brimmed hat will also help.
- If you're on a prescription, consult your doctor on possible side effects in hot weather.
- Eat light, nutritious meals and avoid fatty foods.

**Bugs that Bite.** To live in harmony when around stinging insects:

- Wear insect repellent.



- Don't wear bright-colored clothing.
- Don't use cologne or scented cosmetics, especially floral.
- Don't walk barefoot, and watch where you're walking.
- Avoid rapid movements that look like attacks.
- If you happen upon a nest, move away slowly.
- Don't eat or drink sweet things outdoors. They attract insects like a magnet.
- If you are stung by an insect and begin to experience hives, stomach pains, diarrhea, dizziness, chills, or facial swelling (regardless of where you may have been stung), you are having an allergic reaction. Seek immediate emergency medical help.

**Take a Safe Hike.** A favorite summer activity is a hike in the woods, but it should be carefully planned. Tell someone where you'll be hiking and when you expect to return. Check the forecast to avoid bad weather.



Establish a leader and a plan for changes of direction in the trail. Carry a map and compass and stay on a blazed path when you can. Carry a whistle. Three short blasts is the international signal for help in an emergency.

Wear proper clothing, preferably natural fibers. Long sleeves and full length pants will protect you from insects, the sun and brush. Wear hiking boots or good sturdy walking shoes that are broken in.

Hike in small groups of less than ten people. Carry a first aid kit.

**Coming Home.** So far, so good. Now let's get you home safely. Don't try to complete a long drive on the last day. Sure, you want to get home, but more importantly, you want to arrive safely. Drive part of the way the day before, and enjoy the night. On the last day, sleep late and arrive home relaxed.



